instructions

page 1

Print on white **card** stock [160g - 200g]
Cut on **solid** lines
Fold on **red** dotted lines
Glue as indicated
Lastly, **glue** [**red**] flaps on **outside of box** to keep sides together

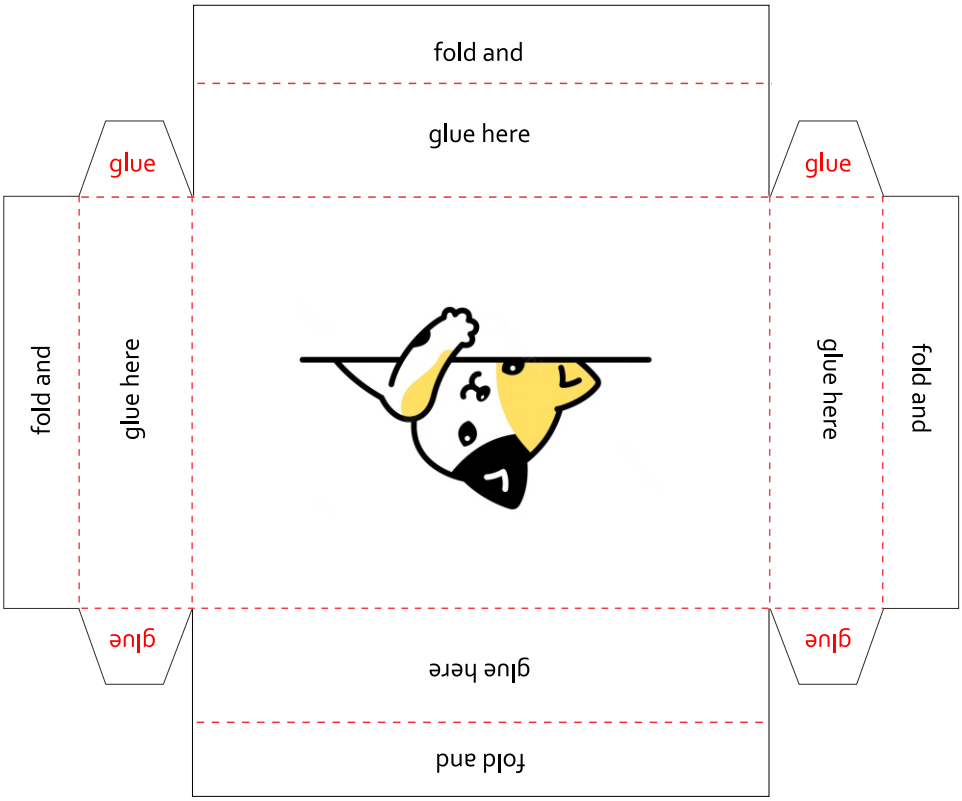
page 2

Print on 80g white paper
Cut out on solid lines
Arrange cut-outs in numerical order

page 3

Print on 80g white paper
Cut on **solid** lines and **fold** on **dotted** lines
Put the 4 folded pages together, making a 'booklet'
Now paste the cut-outs on the 'booklet' pages,
starting with the title picture page, then page 1, page 2, page 3...
ending on page 15 as the last page on the back of the booklet.

kittens
in-a-box
glue


fold and
glue here
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A beautiful pet called Lucy

Belinda had a special pet. Her name was Lucy and she was a beautiful fluffy white kitten with a black smudge on her nose. Her eyes were a mysterious grey-green colour and she had a long tail. Belinda and Lucy were the best of friends.

When Belinda came home from school, Lucy was waiting for her. Sometimes Lucy would jump out at Belinda from behind the gatepost, or climb up into the Jacaranda tree and whisk off Belinda's hair ribbon as she passed below.

She loved to be pushed around in Belinda's doll's pram, dressed up in baby clothes with a knitted teddy tucked in beside her! She also loved to ride in Belinda's backpack, or curl up on her lap while Belinda watched television. At night Lucy slept on her bed, where she would snuggle into Belinda's arms, purring like a tiny engine.

Lucy grew up fast. She loved to jump out of the window at night and go prowling in the moonlit garden. She stalked shadows on the stoep and made friends with a gang of other cats who walked on garden walls. Quite often she was away until the birds awoke to sing in the Jacarandas.

Lucy becomes a mother

"You're almost a big cat now," Belinda said, stroking Lucy's lovely soft fur. Lucy's tummy was becoming very fat.

"Goodness, we'd better not give her quite so much to eat," said Belinda's mother.

"I have news for you," said Belinda's Granny. "Lucy is going to have kittens. The daddy cat must be one of the cats who walks on the walls."

"Kittens? Wow!" Belinda was thrilled. She couldn't wait for the day when the kittens would be born. She was even more excited when she came home from school one afternoon to find Lucy had given birth to four babies in her wardrobe. She lay proudly licking the tiny kittens with her pink tongue.

"Oh! They are so adorable!" everybody said. Lucy let Belinda play with her babies. There was a white one, a black one, a pale grey stripy one, and a fluffy spotted one just like Lucy.

At first the kittens' eyes were tightly shut but after four or five days, their eyes opened.

As they grew, they became lively and mischievous. They climbed the curtains and jumped on the table. Mother was not pleased.

"We can't keep all these cats," she said to Belinda. "You will have to find homes for them."

"Oh no!" cried Belinda. "They are Lucy's children." However, Mother was stern: "Five cats! Impossible!" she said.

With a heavy heart, Belinda took the kittens to school in a basket and gave them all away. A lot of children wanted the kittens. It seemed easy to find homes for them.

Kittens returned, kittens lost and kittens found

That evening there was a knock on the door. There stood the boy who had taken the white kitten. Next to him stood his father with the kitten in his hands.

"We can't keep a cat," said the boy's father. "We live in a flat on the tenth floor. We have no garden. Everyone is out all day. That's no life for a pet. Why didn't anyone ask me first whether my son could take a kitten?"

"You shouldn't just give animals away if you don't know what kind of home they're going to."

He sounded very angry. Belinda took back the white kitten.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I didn't think of that."

She started worrying about the other kittens she had given away. Were they going to be properly cared for?

Tomorrow was Saturday. She decided she would visit the homes of the other children who had taken the kittens.

The girl who had taken the black kitten looked very sad. "My dog killed the kitten," she said. "I didn't think he'd do something like that."

You didn't tell me you had a dog!" shouted Belinda. "Now my kitten is dead!"

"She wasn't your kitten!" the girl shouted back. "You gave her to me."

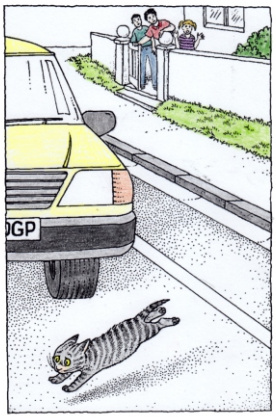
"She's nobody's kitten now," sobbed Belinda as she turned away.

She was almost too afraid to ask about the other kittens.

The pale grey stripy kitten was lost. "It's so strange," said the older sister of the girl who had taken him. "We put him down in the garden and he just took off down the road. He seemed so nervous. We've looked and looked but there's no sign of him."

Nobody had thought of keeping the kitten indoors in a quiet place until he had got to know his new family.

Belinda watched the cars speeding down the busy road. What a dangerous place for a lost kitten!

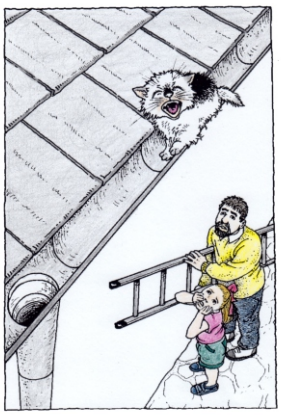


With a heavy heart she knocked on the door of the last house. Silence. Again and again she knocked. There was no-one at home. Belinda was about to turn away when she heard a tiny mew. Looking up, she saw the black-and-white fluffy kitten clinging to the roof. She was stuck.

"Oh no! How did you get up there? What am I going to do?" She could not reach the kitten who just crouched in the gutter and mewed pitifully. At last Belinda found a kind neighbour who brought a ladder. He climbed up and rescued the kitten.

"I'm surprised that family has a kitten," said the neighbour. "They go to their holiday house every weekend. I suppose they thought the kitten would look after itself." Belinda held the tiny body close and felt its heart pattering under the soft fur.

"I am taking you back home," she whispered to the kitten. "It was a big mistake to send you here."



Granny to the rescue

At home, Belinda had an argument with her mother.

"We HAVE to keep these two kittens," she wailed. "The new homes were terrible. The people didn't know how to look after their animals. They said they wanted them, but they didn't really."

"We can't have three cats, Belinda," her mother said. "They will have babies too. How many cats are we going to end up with? Hundreds!"

Granny had the answer.

"There's only one thing to do, and we should have thought of it earlier. We have to take the cats to the vet and have them spayed. Then they won't be able to have babies. We can keep these three if they don't breed."

"What does 'spayed' mean?" asked Belinda.

"It means that the vet, or animal doctor, does a small operation on the cat to remove the part that makes babies," said Granny.

"Well, we had better do it soon," said Mother. "We don't want any more sad stories."

The operations didn't cost too much. Belinda's mother said it was worth it, to avoid all the suffering of unwanted animals.

Lucy and her two daughters are happy and so is Belinda, because now she won't have to find homes for any more kittens!

The End